



Hello Hamilton County

December 2009

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

*"If we did all the things we were capable of doing,
we would literally astound ourselves."*

~Thomas Edison

Six Children Adopted During Hamilton County's Mass Adoption Ceremony

Six children officially joined permanent, loving families on November 20 in Hamilton County's third annual mass adoption ceremony. They include four one-year-old boys, one four-year-old boy, and one six-year-old girl. All six children were victims of abuse and neglect, and all were adopted by families which served as foster families for them prior to the adoptions.



The Honorable James Cissell, Probate Court Judge, presided over Hamilton County's Mass Adoption Ceremony.

reports of child abuse and neglect a year. When intensive services fail and a child can no longer remain safe in a parent's care, the county will seek custody of the child and attempt to find a safe and loving adoptive home. That sometimes takes months or years.

JFS currently has more than 200 children available for adoption. The November 20 ceremony

This ceremony, held during National Adoption Month, partners Hamilton County's Job and Family Services Department (JFS) with the County's Probate Court.

"This is one of the most exciting times of the year for me and for our staff," said Moira Weir, JFS Director. "Often, this is the culmination of a tremendous amount of work to find the right family for a child who has experienced a tough life. Seeing that work result in an emotional, touching ceremony is an uplifting moment for our staff."

stands as a symbol for all of the adoptions JFS does, which includes more than 70 so far in 2009. The children available for adoption come from a variety of backgrounds, neighborhoods, economic circumstances and living situations.

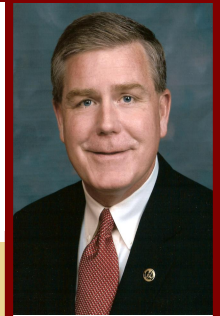
Although National Adoption Month has come to an end, the need still exists. Those interested in adopting or becoming foster parents can learn more by visiting www.hckids.org or by calling 513-632-6366 or by e-mailing adoption@jfs.hamilton-co.org.

Hamilton County investigates more than 6,000



Patrick's Perspective

'Tis the Season! Looking Back and Moving Forward



**Patrick
Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator**

Before we get caught up in the Christmas rush, it's a great time to reflect on our 2009 achievements and look forward to success in 2010.

Here are highlights of some of Hamilton County's achievements in 2009:

- Hamilton County launched the Hamilton County Families website, which provides information to help working families save money, avoid foreclosure, and connect with job training and job opportunities. www.hamiltoncountyfamilies.com
- The County's development related departments, including Public Works, Building Inspections, Rural Zoning, Community Development and Regional Planning were formally consolidated into one department which will be known as the Planning and Development Department. This move results in significant administrative efficiencies and will assist in ensuring a coordinated development philosophy across all County departments.
- Hamilton County launched the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) to help foster youth graduate from high school and transition to higher learning by supporting them with a mentor and financial assistance.
- The County continued to

participate as a stakeholder in the Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project (or Shared Services initiative) with the City of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Business Committee. Numerous opportunities for sharing services amongst local communities are being considered as a means of improving service and reducing costs.

- In October the Board of County Commissioners approved a balanced 2010 general fund budget that did not include any tax increases.
- The Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) was awarded for having the highest payment accuracy rate in food stamps among the 14 largest urban counties in a six-state region of the Midwest. JFS also met the child support paternity establishment benchmark of 80 percent for the first time. This allows for 100 percent reimbursement on federal dollars.
- The Tax Levy Review Committee reviewed and recommended funding levels for three county-wide levies including the Museum Center, the Family Services levy and the Development Disabilities Services levy. All three levies were approved by the voters in November.
- The County completed the financing plan for Phase I of the Banks Riverfront Redevelopment

Project. Additionally, the County secured \$24.9 million in federal stimulus funding to begin work on Phase II of the project on the west side of the Freedom Center.

- The County received a \$4.8 million allocation in Energy Block Grants from the federal government. These funds will be utilized within County Buildings and throughout Hamilton County to enhance energy efficiency and reduce costs for local governments, businesses and homeowners.
- The Community Development Department initiated the federally funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program designed to help local communities deal with the impacts of foreclosed and abandoned properties in Hamilton County.
- JFS established new and innovative ways to communicate with clients, partners and the public and has been recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for these innovative communication efforts. Efforts include online chats, answering online questions, distributing information via Facebook, Twitter and audio podcasts, and the Director's Blog.

Continued on p.3



Continued from p. 2

- The Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners began a “community tour” approach, holding some Monday staff meetings in various cities and townships. These meetings enable community leaders to inform commissioners about what is happening in their area — and about what Hamilton County can do to help.
- Hamilton County launched the Codespear citizen alert program. Citizens can subscribe to receive e-mails, text messages, or phone calls informing them of tornado warnings, flood warnings, amber alerts, chemical spills, and more.
<https://hamco-oh.smartmsg.com/>
- Hamilton County Public Health proactively dealt with the H1N1 flu, providing educational information for the community and vaccinating over 32,000 citizens.
- The Board of County

Commissioners launched the Prescription Drug Discount Program, which has saved county residents over \$100,000 on prescriptions in 2009.

www.hamiltoncountyrx.com

Although the newscasts and headlines tend to focus on the challenges communities face, we experienced many good things in Hamilton County in 2009!

2010 should be no different. We will continue to bring innovation, collaboration, and sound business practices to achieve success for Hamilton County. We will focus on priorities such as:

- Enhancing and creating economic development opportunities that create jobs, reduce crime and enhance the quality of life in county neighborhoods;
- Providing essential services in the most efficient ways possible. When appropriate, we will consolidate services, apply other efficiency initiatives, and aggressively

pursue state, federal, or alternative sources of funding for mandated services;

- Engaging in a sustained effort to increase revenues without increasing the tax burden or fee burden on residents;
- Developing long-term solutions to address the riverfront fund situation;
- Supporting the work of the Hamilton County Government Reform Task Force. The task force’s recommendations will guide the Board of County Commissioners in considering an alternate form of County government that can best serve this community.

I believe that success can arise out of challenging situations. We are a testament to that. We’ve enjoyed great success in 2009, and I look forward to achieving more in 2010. Thank you to everyone who contributed to Hamilton County’s success this year.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a healthy, prosperous and successful 2010.

Smiles All Around at Hamilton County’s November 20 Mass Adoption Ceremony





Environmental Services Employee Speaks in Washington on Behalf of Diesel Emission Reduction Program

On October 28, 2009, Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) employee, Ken Edgell, spoke at a reception held by the Diesel Technology Forum in Washington, D.C. to recognize the early successes of the Diesel Emissions Reduction Program and to honor Senators Voinovich (R-OH) and Carper (D-DE) for their leadership in sponsoring legislation which led to the program's creation.

The Diesel Emissions Reduction Program has, through its first year projects, reduced 46,000 tons of NOx and 2,200 tons of particulate matter while also saving 3.2 million gallons of fuel and reducing more than 35,600 tons of CO2.

Edgell was asked to address the distinguished attendees at the October 28th reception as a recent recipient of a Diesel Emissions Reduction Program Grant. Edgell, on behalf of the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, applied for and received a \$1 million Diesel Emissions Reduction Program Grant to help purchase 60 clean diesel technology school buses for seven Hamilton County School Districts. By purchasing 60 clean diesel technology school buses, 15,000 pounds of air pollutant emissions will be reduced annually.

Edgell's work with the Diesel Emissions Reduction Program is helping to provide a cleaner, healthier commute for school children in Southwest Ohio!



Pictured (from left to right): Senator George Voinovich (R-OH); Ken Edgell, Environmental Administrative Coordinator, Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services; Vincent Carroccia, Administrative Services Director, Department of Public Works, Wilmington, DE; Senator Thomas Carper (D-DE)

The Southwest Ohio Clean Diesel Campaign

HCDOES began the Southwest Ohio Clean Diesel Campaign in 2004 to work with school districts to secure funding to reduce exhaust emissions from district-owned school buses.

To date, HCDOES' Clean Diesel Campaign has received \$500,000 in grant funding and retrofitted 460 district-owned school buses with clean diesel technology to reduce emissions. This has resulted in an estimated 28,000 pounds of air pollutants removed annually, meaning tens of thousands of school children riding the retrofitted buses in Southwest Ohio enjoy a cleaner, healthier commute to and from school.

For more information about the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services' Clean Diesel Campaign, visit www.hcdoes.org and click on Clean Diesel Campaign.



Hamilton County MR/DD's New Name: Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services



Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services' Superintendent Cheryl Phipps removed the letters "MR" from the organization's Administration Building, reflecting the name change effective on November 4.

What was formerly the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD became the Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services on November 4.

Superintendent Cheryl Phipps drove home the name change by climbing into a truck from Duke Energy that hoisted her to the top of the administration building on Madison Road in East Walnut Hills to rip the two letters "MR" from the signs on the building. Hundreds of supporters on the ground exploded in cheers as the letters came off.

The name change came a day after the agency passed a five-year property tax levy with 68% of the vote. The levy represents 73% of funding the agency uses for services to more than 8,000 individuals with disabilities in Hamilton County and their families.

At the agency's September 2009 board meeting, a resolution was adopted to change the name November 4. The change had to wait while the levy campaign was in progress, as the old name is what was on the fall ballot.

Since the agency has become Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services, the governing body of seven community members appointed by the Commissioners and the probate judge will be known as Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services Board.

"We like the word 'services' because that's what we're all about," Phipps said. "A few other counties are doing that, while others are sticking with 'developmental disabilities'. The important thing to all of us is that the term 'mental retardation' will be gone."



5th Annual Awards Ceremony Honors Outstanding Recycling Achievements In Hamilton County



Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune serves as Chair of the Solid Waste Management District's Policy Committee and spoke during the awards ceremony.

The Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District's 5th annual Recycling Awards Ceremony took place on Tuesday, November 17th at the Mill Race Lodge in Winton Woods. The Recycling Awards acknowledged outstanding recycling achievements by individuals, schools, communities and businesses in Hamilton County.

The 2009 Recycling Award recipients include:

- **Friend of Recycling Award:**
Luanne Diffin
- **Outstanding School Recycling Program Award:**
Monfort Heights Elementary School
- **Outstanding Recycling Educator Award:**
Cris Cornelssen, Winton Woods Elementary School
- **Student Recycler of the Year Award:** Sam Dubin, Walnut Hills High School

- **Best Community Recycling Program Award (Greater than 10,000 population):** City of Blue Ash
- **Best Community Recycling Program Award (Less than 10,000 population):** City of Madeira
- **Most Improved Community Recycling Program Award:**
City of Mt. Healthy
- **Public Recycling Award:**
Duke Energy Convention Center
- **Go Green Challenge Award:**
Neyer Properties
- **Recycling at Work Program of the Year Award:** Cincinnati Bell
- **The Interchange Business of the Year Award:** Frame USA
- **Outstanding Recycling in a Multi-Family Residence Award:** One Lytle Place Apartments

- **John Van Volkenburgh Award for Recycling Excellence:**
City of Wyoming

Commissioner Portune cited the "extraordinary contributions" of the award winners.

"A theme seemed to be emanating from the work recognized during the Awards Ceremony," Commissioner Portune said. "We see time and time again a shift towards making it cheaper and more efficient to recycle than to put things out for the landfill. People naturally gravitate towards what's cheaper and easier. The volume of materials recycled and the percentage of people recycling all increased in communities where they're making that shift. Next year, there will likely be a focus on expanding those efforts into other Hamilton County communities."

For more information about recycling, please visit this link:
www.hamiltoncountyclecyles.org



Soil & Water Conservation District Sponsors Upcoming Events for Students and Teachers

Upcoming Teacher Workshop: Soils Workshop

Date: Saturday, January 30, 2010
Location: Butler County SWCD
1802 Princeton Road
Hamilton, OH 45011
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Cost: \$10
Who: Educators grades 2-4

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

by Friday, January 15.

To register or for more information, please contact
Gwen Roth 513-772-7645 or
gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org or Lynn White
513-785-6666 or whitelr@butlercountyohio.org .

Graduate Credit: UC credit available for a reduced
rate from the Economics Center.

Join us to learn what is soil? Where does it come
from? What is erosion and how can we reduce
it? And much more... Find out about life under-
ground in the Hamilton County SWCD's
Soil Tunnel and the Butler County SWCD's Educa-
tion Soil Trailer. Try many wonderful hands-on
activities and get some great background informa-
tion to boost your knowledge and level of
comfort in teaching soils to your students.
Participants will receive teacher resources to use in
the classroom, light breakfast and snacks.
Sponsored by: Butler County and Hamilton County
Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the Ohio
Farm Bureau.

Envirothon 2010

Calling all High School Teachers! The Envirothon is a
competitive, outdoor, academic event for high school
students. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of
soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology and a current
environmental issue (Protection of Groundwater through
Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning).

Interested schools may enter up to two teams (3 - 5
members per team with alternates).

This year's competition will be held on Tuesday, May 4,
2010, at the Voice of America Park (Butler County). Last
year over 70 teams competed from 16 counties. The top
four of the five-member teams continue on to the State
Envirothon held in June. The top State team will compete
in the Canon Envirothon in August held in California.

Study materials are being posted on the Internet. Please
visit the website at www.areaenvirothon.org.

The deadline for entering the number of teams is
Friday, February 5, 2010.

Please call Gwen at 513-772-7645 x14
to register the teams for your school.

Poster and Essay Contests

The District is sponsoring an essay contest and a poster contest for Hamilton County students. The theme is
"**Conservation Habits - Healthy Habitats**", which corresponds with the National Association of Conservation
District's Stewardship Week *April 25 – May 2, 2010*. For more information, please visit this link: www.nacdnet.org.

Grade Divisions: Essay contest: 3 - 5, 6 - 8, and 9 -12; Poster contest: K - 2, 3 - 5, 6 - 8, and 9 -12.

For detailed information on each contest, please see our website at www.hcswcd.org.

Both posters and essays are due by **Friday, March 12, 2010**, in the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation
District office at 29 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 2901, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246, Attention: Cheryl Reinke Peck.
Winners from each grade level category will receive a \$25 gift certificate and sponsoring teachers receive a \$25 gift
certificate. All essays and posters become the property of Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District.



Builders, Developers and Farmers Can Attend Upcoming Events Sponsored by the Soil & Water Conservation District

For the Builders and Developers: The 7th Annual Sediment and Erosion Control Field Day

Date: Wednesday, February 24th, 2010
Time: 3:00pm to 7:00pm
Cost: \$30.00 (early registration) includes steak dinner/show
Location: Clermont County Fairgrounds in Owensville, OH

The Planning Committee for the Field Day has switched gears. The event will focus on attracting those persons who install the practices in the field. These are the contractors, builders and even developers who are responsible for installation and maintenance of required BMPs. The event will be held in the "off" season and in the evening. It will feature a nationally recognized comedian as the keynote speaker. Dinner will include sirloin steak with a cash bar.

TOP FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND THIS EVENT:

1. Sessions include outside field demonstrations IN FEBRUARY!!!
2. Representative from the **National Association of Home Builders**
3. Vendor booths with product demonstrations
4. STEAK DINNER included, cash bar
5. FREE SHOW with **DREW HASTINGS** (with paid registration, of course!)

Sponsorships available - Limited display space

If interested, please contact Marsha Rolph, Warren SWCD: 513-695-1861 or mrolph2000@yahoo.com
Brought to you by the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Butler, Clermont, Hamilton & Warren Counties in partnership with the Clermont County Fair Board.

For the Farmer: CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

The Farm Services Agency is continually accepting applications to enroll environmentally sensitive areas such as grassed waterways, filter strips, quail buffers and some wetland practices into the CRP program. The purpose of the program is to reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in this program, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, the Farm Service Agency will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year. For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact:

**Butler-Hamilton FSA,
1802 Princeton Rd, Suite 200
Hamilton, Ohio 45011-4742
Phone 513-887-3727**



Hamilton County Soil & Water District Names Outstanding Conservation Partners For 2009

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) held its 64th Annual Meeting on September 17, 2009, at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. The District named the following individuals the Outstanding Conservation Partners for 2009.

2009 Education Partner of the Year

This year the District recognized the Children's Librarians of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County as the Education Partner of the Year. The Children's Librarians have helped the District expand program offerings to a much larger audience. Debbie Hull (Madeira Children's Librarian) and Megan Brandmeier (Norwood Children's Librarian) accepted the award on behalf of the Children's Librarians.



Megan Brandmeier, Gwen Roth
and Debbie Hull

2009 Conservation Developer of the Year

Don Misrach and Tom Miller, owners of Glendower Place LLC, are the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District's 2009 Conservation Developers of the Year. The District recognizes their efforts at the Glendower Place Subdivision in Whitewater Township. Glendower Place is a densely wooded single-family subdivision that contains several streams and an existing lake. Much effort was put in to minimize the disturbance of the wooded areas reducing the amount of earthwork and fitting the development into the surrounding topography.



Don Misrach and Dan Taphorn

2009 Water Quality Partner of the Year

Bruce Koehler, Senior Environmental Planner with Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) is this year's 2009 Water Quality Partner winner. Bruce has worked for OKI protecting water resources for the last 20 years. He has worked with us on many stream and wetland restorations, drinking water protection, and storm water management projects.



Brian Bohl and Bruce Koehler



Hamilton County Development Company Presents Annual Awards



Patrick Thompson, County Administrator; Randy Wilhelm, Recipient of the Larry Albice Award; and Rea Waldon, Chair of HCDC attended the HCDC 2009 Annual Awards Luncheon in November.

In November, the Hamilton County Development Company (HCDC) presented annual awards. Hamilton County Commission President David Pepper spoke to the group attending the annual awards luncheon, and County Administrator Patrick Thompson presented the awards.

HCDC is a full-service economic development agency with a public purpose to create and retain jobs, promote community growth and improve the local economy. To accomplish this, HCDC administers three program areas. Together, these programs make HCDC a one-stop shop for business financing, assistance for entrepreneurs and community economic development.

In 2009, the HCDC's Economic Development Office generated more than \$42 million in new investments and created or retained more than 2,500 jobs.

Award winners included:

- 2009 Larry Albice Award Winner: Randy Wilhelm, NetTrekker
- 2009 Economic Development Project Winner: StandardAreo
- 2009 Borrower of the Year: The Metalworking Group, Inc.
- 2009 Lender of the Year: Park National Bank of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky
- 2009 Tenant of the Year: Emerson Design

For more information about the award winners and about HCDC, please see the HCDC 2009 Annual Report at this link:

<http://www.hcdc.com/about/annual>



Caring Families are Needed!



Anthony

A jack of all sports, Anthony loves every game he plays: basketball, football, baseball and soccer. He also really enjoys being active and spending time outdoors. A funny and caring teenager, Anthony likes school and is eager to learn new spelling words in Language Arts.

He's still thinking about potential careers, but Anthony thinks he'd like to become a police officer when he is finished with school.

Although Anthony hopes to be adopted by a large, bustling family with lots of animals, he would also benefit from a good amount of one-on-one attention.

Anthony would thrive with a nurturing, supportive, active family.

**To learn more about Anthony and others available for adoption,
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.**



Please post "Hello Hamilton County," so everyone can see what's going on!

Hello Hamilton County is published monthly. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County's website. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus.

Laura Maus: 513-946-4708
Laura.maus@hamilton-co.org